



## **Center for Community Preparedness – Operations**

In keeping with the core functions of Public Health (Assessment, Assurance and Policy Development), the Operations section of the Center for Community Preparedness serves as the lead agent in providing guidance to the nine (9) regions during a public health threat. As a component of Emergency Support Function 8, the Operations section is responsible for providing medical oversight within the Medical Special Needs Shelters (MSNS). This includes the coordination of medical services, staffing, education and training and the acquisition of medical resources. With a decrease in funding, disaster preparedness efforts, response and recovery efforts, and the delivery of medical services would be inept for meeting the needs of the community. A decrease in funding would also alleviate the existence of a strong and viable preparedness program, thus rendering the inability to respond efficiently and timely during a disaster. With a strong funding source, lives would be saved, mortality rates would decrease amongst the at-risk and vulnerable populations. This population pertains to individuals with special medical needs, no transportation for evacuation, and those requiring assistance with basic life sustaining needs.

The Operation section functions according to the National Incident Management System. This is based on the National *Response Framework (NRF)*, which guides the Nation on how to conduct an all-hazards response. Collaboration is essential for the Administration/Finance, Logistics, and Planning section for the overall implementation of tactical strategies that includes mobilization of resources for bus triage, evacuation, Critical Transportation Needs Shelters, Temporary Medical Operation and Staging Areas, Federal Medical Stations, and reentry of citizens to their home of residence or to an area of safety. These efforts would be nonexistent if funding was not available to carry out the mission as outlined in the Executive Order MJF 96-27 and from lessons learned during previous Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

### **Objectives**

1. To provide a safe environment for the community during a disaster by coordinating the medical operations and activating the staff needed to operate the Medical Special Needs Shelters within the eight regions of Louisiana.

2. To monitor the health status of Louisiana residents with the coordination and oversight of medical services. This is achieved by assigning Department of Health and Hospitals medical, nonmedical staff and volunteers to the Medical Special Needs Shelter.

3. To ensure education, training and outreach activities are implemented to promote a greater level of awareness in preparation for a pandemic event. This is accomplished by the dissemination of Emergency Preparedness educational materials and conducting presentations to the Department of Health and Hospitals staff, community partners, stakeholders, and volunteers.

#### Performance Indicators

- Number of tabletop exercises
- Medical Special Needs Shelters readiness in Louisiana

#### Narrative

The purpose to the Operation Section is to develop and implement strategy and tactics to carry out incident objectives. It directs the preparation of specific unit operational plans and request, and identifies and dispatch resources as needed. The Operations section provides medical staffing and/or coordination of services for those seeking refuge in Louisiana's 8- Medical Special Needs Shelter, 5-Critical Transportation Needs Shelter, 3-Federal Medical Station, Bus Triage process for the 9 Office of Public Health regions and for the statewide Re-entry process (In-State/out of State which enables citizens to return to their home of residence).

In response to the problems encountered with removing ill clients from evacuating buses during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Center for Community Preparedness initiated plans for Bus Triage to address all-hazards planning to quickly identify at-risk shelterees requiring additional care, thus preventing significant deterioration.

The Operation section is essential in providing consistency in standardizing emergency preparedness and maintaining an effective infrastructure within the State of Louisiana. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to meet this objective. Strategies are centered on an all-hazards approach to maintain and restore a self-reliant, strong and resilient community based leadership within our State. Another responsibility of the Operations section was the development of a comprehensive Department of Health and Hospital and Department of Social Services Medical Special Needs Shelter Procedural Guide Manual for all employees. The Operations section is the lead for the Medical Special Needs Shelter Task Force being responsible for statewide training for the Department of Health and Hospital medical and non-medical employees.

The Operation section is comprised of Nursing, Pharmacy, Lab, Epidemiology, Immunization and the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. During an event, these programs are activated to provide guidance to the 9 regions. They seek to anticipate and meet the needs of the communities before, during and after a crisis. This ranges from a natural to a man-made disaster, i.e. biological, chemical, nuclear, radiation, waterway and railway events, inclement weather to include hurricanes, storms and flooding. Another role of Operations is educating all the employees for the Department of Health and Hospital, community partners, business community, and citizens on all-hazards preparedness and response efforts. This also includes developing the H1N1 Influenza Operational plan for vaccinating the residents of Louisiana.

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The activities of the Operation section are mandated by several State and Federal requirements.

These include:

- CDC PHEP Cooperative Agreement
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-21
- Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA)
- Louisiana Health Emergency Powers Act, R.S. 29:760
- Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) 2009 Update
- Stafford Act
- Executive Order MJF 96-27